

From the New Orleans Picayune.  
Proceedings of the Memphis Convention.

*First Day—Evening Session.*  
Memphis, Oct. 23, 1849.

The convention assembled at 4 o'clock p. m., when the Hon. Nicholas Davis, of Alabama, chairman of the committee of organization, to whom was referred the nomination of the officers of the convention, made a report. Lieut. M. F. Maury, of U. S., was unanimously nominated president. Hon. C. C. Clay, of Alabama; W. T. Mason, of Mississippi; Col. Willoughby Williams, of Tennessee; Col. K. F. W. Alston, of South Carolina; Dr. D. Jamison, of Georgia; G. Col. Mannel White, of Louisiana; ex-Governor T. S. S. Drew, of Arkansas; Asahel Smith, of Texas; Ashton Johnson, of Missouri; Wm. M. Hall, of Illinois; Col. B. E. Gray, of Kentucky; Col. John T. Trezevant, of Virginia; Joseph H. Thompson, of Pennsylvania; and L. S. Robinson, of New York, were appointed vice presidents; and H. Arthur, of Mississippi; Richard Walker, of Alabama; E. J. Carroll, of Tennessee; E. N. Price, of South Carolina; Alex. Walker, of Louisiana; L. J. Reardon, of Arkansas; E. W. Upshaw, of Texas; A. Finley, of Missouri; and H. J. East, of Kentucky, as secretaries.

H. G. Smith, of Tennessee, moved the adoption of the report, which was carried unanimously. ♦

Lieut. Maury appearing in the convention, was conducted to the chair [This article of farinaceous is remarkable in the original, chair, in which John Hancock

and presided at the first constitutional convention.] On ascending the platform, Lieut. Maury thus addressed the delegates:

GENTLEMEN: I am under obligations which I cannot express for the honor you have done me. I am sensible that I am more indebted to your kindness than to any fitness on my part for the distinguished position to which you have called me. I must beg that you will let your charity be as broad as your kindness, and with it cover up all my short-comings.

For what have we here assembled? It is because this country, in its upward and onward progress, has arrived at that stage from which increased facilities of communication between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans are required for the great purposes of State. Why am I, an officer of the navy, here present to take part in your deliberations? It is because the people of this great valley, without distinction of party, have assembled here, in the person of their representatives, to deliberate on measures of national defence. It is well known that the acquisition of California was regarded with no favorable eye by that power, "the sound of whose morning drum enriches the earth, and upon whose flag the world arrayed that in case of a war with that power, should a war unfortunately ever occur, her first effort would be against California; and the only means by which its possession can be rendered secure in such an emergency." By the construction of a railroad from the mouth of this valley to those shores, over which troops and materials can be transported with facility.

In consequence of the use of railroads and of other improvements and inventions of the age, the whole war system of national defence, as hitherto pursued by this government, has been brought to a stand still. The item in the annual navy appropriation bill for the gradual increase of the navy, and on which many millions of dollars have been expended, has ceased to find a place in the navy estimates, because the inventions and improvements to which I have alluded have exploded the plan of increasing the navy according to our former notions. For the same reason the construction of railroads along the Atlantic seaboard has, in a great measure, put at naught the plan upon the treasury for lining the coast with forts and castles. In contemplating the changes which the introduction of steam on the ocean and of railroads on the land will make in the system of warfare, we, as military men, are almost ready to exclaim with a Mexican proverb, "Ohello's occupation's gone." In the first war in which this country shall be required to put forth her energies, it will be found that railroads are the strongest fortifications, and the magnetic telegraph the most powerful battery that has ever been brought into military operations. By treaty with Mexico, this nation is bound to prevent Indian depredations upon that country, and this great national railway to the Pacific would greatly facilitate the government of the United States in discharging the public faith so pledged by treaty stipulation. We build fortifications, and they remain mere piles of stone and mortar, of which the public can make no practical use until we are overtaken by the emergency.

time of peace should be of great advantage in promoting the welfare of the Union, in subverting the interests of commerce, and in advancing the prosperity of the people, should it on this account be regarded the less as a fortification.

Gentlemen have assembled here to consider of this measure with a single eye to the good of the country, of the whole country, and nothing but the country; party spirit, sectional feeling, and local prejudice, I am assured, are not in the character of the delegates here present, and I have no part in the proceedings of this convention. We are not in possession of information sufficient to justify us in saying at present where this railroad shall begin, what route it shall take, or where it shall end. We want to take the best route that full and complete examinations and surveys shall point out. We want it to begin, and we want it to end, at those points which shall be found most convenient for the great national objects and ends for which it shall be made. If, after such examinations and explorations, it shall be found that St. Louis is the best point for the eastern terminus, let it begin there; if Memphis, let it begin here; or if at any other point between the two, or at any other point north or south of both, in the name of the people of this State, and in consideration of their national desires, there let it begin.

It has been urged as an objection to this railroad that it cannot support itself. Pray, does any support itself? Do our fortifications support themselves and make divisions? Where is the work connected with the national

defences of these United States that supports itself or makes dividends? If those who take this view expect dividends of cent per cent, writing from persons who are determined to be transported over this national work, I hope it *never* will make dividends. It will bring forth *fruits* far more valuable than it is possible for the largest *dividends* ever to be. It will be to the immense region of the country between this sea and the Pacific, that the Mississippi is to this valley. It will spread out its branches to the North and the South. It will enrich the people and increase the capacities of the country to sustain population, and it will give to this government the power to tax and to raise revenue from that wealth and that increased population and its posterity forever. These are some of the peaceful *fruits—dividends* if you please—of this great national work of defence.

The articles, besides troops and munitions of war, which are to be transported over this road, are, that class known in railroad tariffs as the light and bulky, or the more valuable article of merchandise. We may expect branch roads to be built by private enterprise from it into northern Mexico, and the will extend down into the heart of the country, until the expense of transportation by the iron horse from the North shall meet on equal terms with the cargoes brought over the mountains on the backs of mules and asses from the ports of Mexico. All the Mexicans above this line will send their foreign merchandise over this railway. They will amount to several millions of dollars, and this country will have the monopoly of that commerce. We may expect each

Mexican" to consume of the goods of the United States. About "Yukatan notes" at the least two or three dollars per article, and we shall receive in return therefor the produce of the Mexican mines. But there are other articles of commerce, such as the great agricultural products of this country, which cannot afford to pay the expense of transportation from one end of this road to the other. I have examined the tariff of freights on merchandise as per fifty-odd railroads in this country. Merchandise is divided generally by them into three classes. The first class consists of the heavy articles, such as coal and iron, which require the roughest operation for transportation, which do not require houses for storage, and which are not liable to loss or injury by weather or the road. The second class consists of such articles as grain, provisions, &c.; and the third class consists of light bulky articles, which are charged by measurement, and not by weight, and which consist of the more valuable articles of commerce, such as cloths and manufactured goods. The average rate of freight charged by these fifty-odd roads on the first and cheapest class of articles is four and a half cents per ton per mile, and the average rate on the third and dearest class is eight cents per ton per mile. Now, suppose that we take but one-third from the cheapest class, and say that this railroad, which has no dividends to make, can afford to carry all articles of merchandise at the rate of three cents per ton per mile, the distance of the length of the road by an air-line will be about fifteen hundred nautical miles, which, increased by necessary detour, would give us, as the length

of the road, say two thousand square miles, wheat, at three cents per ton per mile, would require a toll of *sixty dollars per ton from one end of the road to the other*. It appears, then, to the gentlemen present from Illinois, Missouri, Ohio, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the southern States, and ask if their hemp, their wheat, or their flour,